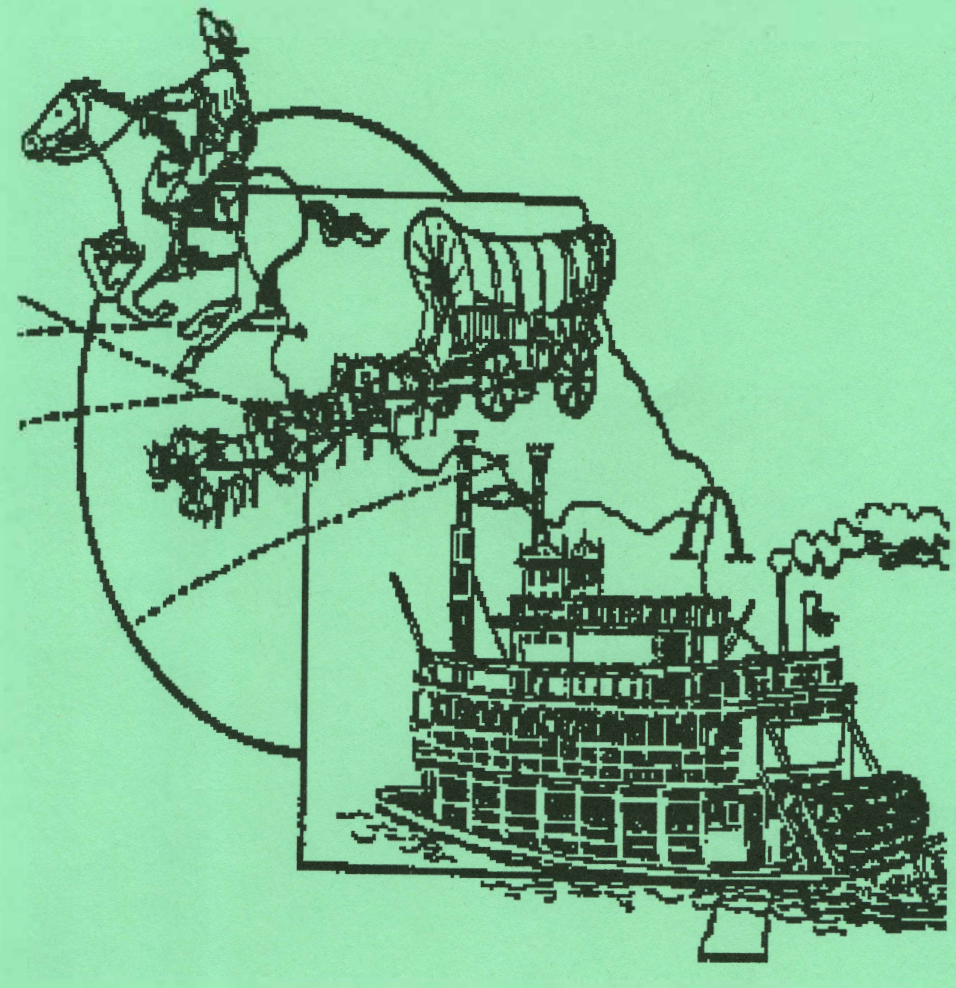

Toward The Setting Sun

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TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal of the Missouri Conference

The United Methodist Church

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EDITOR'S NOTES

In this issue we are celebrating the fifty-year anniversary of the merger that created the United Methodist Church. Each of the three articles reprinted here addresses a different aspect of the denominations that formed the merger.

The article by Lowell Newland is concerned with the growth of the United Brethren Church in Missouri, tracing its development from the early missionary efforts in Jasper County, to the eventual formation of the statewide Missouri Conference. Newland places more emphasis on the developments in southern Missouri and Kansas than in northern Missouri. This was a part of a paper presented before the Historical Workshop of the South Central Jurisdiction at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on June 17-18, 1968.

Christiane Batjer's article first appeared in *Toward the Setting Sun* in the Fall, 1984 issue. At the time Rev. Batjer was a student at Eden Theological Seminary. The focus of her paper is on the history of the United Brethren Church in northern Missouri during the second half of the nineteenth century. She describes the various issues and challenges that faced this isolated rural conference.

The third article in this issue is a speech presented before the Missouri East Annual Conference in 1965. At the time the Rev. Dorsey Levell was pastor of Brentwood Evangelical United Brethren Church in Springfield. Brentwood was one of the largest, most active, churches in the Missouri Conference of the EUB. There is a profile of him in the June 2018 issue of the *Missouri Methodists*, page 10. In his address, Rev. Levell emphasized the historical threads that connected the two denominations. His remarks are based upon an address under the same title that was presented before the EUB General Conference of 1962, by C.C. Parlin.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

History Of The Missouri Conference 5
Lowell Newland

The United Brethren In Christ 9
Christiane Maurer-Batjer

Our Common Heritage 19
Dorsey Levell

HISTORY OF THE MISSOURI CONFERENCE: [OF THE FORMER EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH]

BY LOWELL NEWLAND[1]

The first United Brethren class known to be organized in Missouri was in Clark County in 1851. This class was organized by John Everhart, who, in August 1841, had been sent to Iowa by the Wabash Conference. His missionary endeavor extended over most of southern Iowa and, at times, into northern Missouri. The second class was established soon after in Union County by Ira B. Ryan, who was also a member of the Iowa Conference.

In 1851 the annual session of the Sandusky Conference placed in the hands of Bishop Glossbrenner the sum of $126.00, to be used in Missouri, providing a suitable missionary could be found.

1852 was a very significant year for the church as a whole, as well as the Missouri Conference. This year the Sandusky Conference met at Johnstown, Ohio, and appointed a committee to consider the question of World Wide Missions. John Collins Bright was made the chairman of this committee and the results of their labor was the organization, by the 1853 General Conference, of "The Home, Frontier and Foreign Missionary Society." Under the able leadership of the Rev. Mr. Bright, missions were subsequently planted in Tennessee, Canada, Minnesota, Michigan, Kansas, Oregon, Africa and Missouri.

The first regular preaching done in Missouri was in Jasper county, in the southwest corner of the state. Several United Brethren families, including a few Quarterly Conference preachers, had moved into this area. The home of one, John Harris, was the center for their work.

At its regular session in 1852, the Miami United Brethren Conference unanimously elected Henry Kumler, Jr., as "Presiding Elder for Missouri" and added

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[1] 1968. "A History of the Missouri Conference". In *A Summary of the Histories of the Annual Conference of the former Evangelical United Brethren Church within the Bounds of the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church* edited by Marvin M. Polson and William J. Dale. [Originally published for the Historical Workshop of the South Central Jurisdiction at Oklahoma City, June 17-18, 1968.]

$30 and a promise of prayer support to the $126 given the year before by the Sandusky Conference.

That same year, Henry Kumler, Jr., make the trip to Jasper County, Missouri, by buggy. His efforts met with success, but he soon realized that the work could not make progress without churches. He, therefore, returned to the Miami Conference, raised funds, purchased and shipped sufficient materials for the erection of a church.

In an article to the *Religious Telescope* sometime in 1852, Henry Kumler, Jr., wrote of his contact with one John Terrel in Jasper county, Missouri, whose great desire was that his brother Josiah Terrel, come and see him, adding: "May the Lord grant that some of our brethren may come over to Missouri and help us."

The first act of the newly organized "Home, Frontier and Foreign Mission Board" was to assign Josiah Terrel, of the Illinois conference, to the Missouri Mission in southwestern Missouri with authority to take charge there. The Religious Telescope carried an item November 2, 1853, stating that on September 25th Josiah Terrel had arrived in jasper County, Missouri, with his family.

Terrel was a many of no ordinary capacity. After arrival in Missouri, he lost no time in contacting his fellow workers. In its first quarterly Conference meeting, held November 5, 1853, Josiah Terrel was given the commission to "Travel over the entire work (Jasper County) as often as possible, and when he thinks necessary, to occupy new fields." His efforts were not long confined to Jasper County, however, as he established soon thereafter a preaching appointment in "Indian Territory" near the present Fort Scott, Kansas.

The Home, Frontier and Foreign Mission Board met for its first annual session in Westerville, Ohio, June 1, 1854. On April 20, Josiah Terrel had sent his first report which reads: "We are in a slave state as you are aware, but this does not hinder us as much as many in your country imagine, for I am quite sure that not one in ten of our citizens holds slaves and that three-fourths of the people are in heart opposed to slavery. There is room enough here for forty missionaries if we had them. I preached to a large congregation of Cherokee Indians one week ago last Sabbath. It was truly heart-searching to see the red men of the forest gladly receiving the Word of God. Quite a number of them have been added to the church, and general peace and prosperity prevails on the mission."

November 3, 1854, the Missouri Mission Conference was organized at Short Creek School House, Jasper County, Missouri. J.C. Bright presided in the absence of Bishop Edwards. The ministers consisted of three ordained and two un-ordained missionaries, assigned to five mission fields.

The chairman of the Home, Frontier and Foreign Mission Board reported July 26, 1855: "We deeply sympathize with the brethren of the Missouri conference in their many discouragements; yet we rejoice in their untiring perseverance and success. This is indeed a frontier country and possesses few of the advantages enjoyed in the Eastern and Middle States—quite beyond public improvements."

The minutes of the Mission Board for 1856 carry the following observation: "The Missouri Mission Conference consists of four ministers, exclusive of those connected with it who laobor in Kansas. They have nobly maintained the doctrines and discipline of the church, upon the question of slavery not excepted. The 'gold fever' carried off for a time a large number of the people from southwestern Missouri and Arkansas. This manipulated somewhat against the world. But the greatest difficulties have arisen out of the violent and protracted agitation growing out of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. (Which had provided that all territory to be admitted to the Union north of the 36°30 except Missouri was to be forever free.)[2] Our dear missionaries have been repeatedly threatened with violence if they did not desist from preaching."

Superintendent D. Edwards wrote to the Board in November 1855, "In some respects this past year has been hard for western missionaries, owing to almost a famine producing drought, and the great excitement on the subject of slavery. No one connected with slavery in any way has been able to find their way into the societies. Truly our ministers and churches are lights in a dark place."

The Mission Board appointed Rev. George Perkins, of the Sciota Conference, to the Missouri Conference Mission Jun 5, 1856, and appropriated funds for moving expenses and a year's salary, a total of $400.

In the 1856 Quadrennial report of the Board of Missions, John C. Bright wrote: "The Missouri-Kansas conflict, has been able to add but little to the numerical strength of the church; but its influence upon the people of Southwestern Missouri has been

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[2] Editor's note [original editor, Marvin M. Polson and William J. Dale.]

salutary and by no means insignificant. It has been a clear light in a dark place. This conference should by all means be sustained and strengthened."

The General conference of 1857 made the state line between Missouri and Iowa the boundary line between the two conference. In keeping with this ruling the Des Moines Conference adopted the following resolution in 1859: "Whereas the General Conference of 1857 made the state line between Iowa and Missouri the ecclesiastical line between the two conference; and whereas the Brethren south of the line desire to unite with the Missouri Conference; there be if Resolved that we acquiesce in the action of the General Conference and the wise of our Missouri Brethren, and by general consent we relinquish our claim to that territory." Here we see the rise of another conference within the boundaries of Missouri, taking in that area from the Missouri River to the Iowa border.

THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST: NORTH MISSOURI CONFERENCE, FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE

CHRISTIANE MAURER-BATJER

United Methodists living at the end of the 20th century may have only a vague idea about the Evangelical United Brethren Church that merged with Methodism in 1968. Even more overshadowed by the passage of time is the life of the United Brethren in Christ that merged with the Evangelical Church in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

The United Brethren in Christ, the spiritual heirs of William Otterbein and Martin Boehm, began with an informal organization of German-speaking preachers in 1800. The formal establishment of the church came with the first General Conference in 1815. By the middle of the century, when missions were begun in Missouri, the church was, at least, bilingual, if not primarily English-speaking. All of the Conference Minutes for Missouri were written in English. This paper outlines some of the major events and issues in the life of the United Brethren in Missouri, during the last half of the nineteenth century. It covers only the work of the North Missouri Conference, leaving for another time the work of the South Missouri Conference established in 1881.

The first United Brethren class was organized in Clark County, in the north-eastern corner of Missouri, in 1851, by a class meeting in Union County, Iowa. Ira B. Ryan, of the Iowa Conference, was the preacher (1). However, all sources agree that the first preaching and the first regular mission work were done in Southwest Missouri.

Several United Brethren families had moved to Missouri and settled in Jasper County. "The home of John Harris, in Jasper County, was a center for the work"(2). With the westward movement of the frontier, Missouri came into focus as one of the mission fields. Already in 1851, Bishop J.J. Glossbrenner had received the sum of $126 to use for mission in Missouri (3). In either 1852 (4) or in 1853 (5), Henry Kumler Jr. was appointed to the Missouri Mission. According to Thompson, Kumler started out for Missouri after a rather serious leg injury, on September 18th, 1852. Kumler met many difficulties in his effort to establish churches and found it necessary to travel East for more support. Reports about the' number of his trips and his accomplishments vary. Drury mentions a "little house of worship" that was built with Kumler's help.(6) In 1853 Josiah Terrell was sent as missionary to Missouri by the newly formed "Home,

Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society of the United Brethren in Christ". The General Conference of 1853 constituted eight new Conferences, among them the Missouri Conference, which had at that time 3 preachers and 20 members (7).

On November 3, 1854, the Miss6uri Annual Conference was organized at Short Creek schoolhouse, Jasper County, with either J.E. Bright presiding in the absence of Bishop Edwards (8), or with Bishop Edwards himself in the chair (9) • Annual Conferences were held from 1854 until 1858. The Mission in Missouri was supported by the Mission Society with $1750.00 in the years 1853-57 and with $1350 in the following quadrennium.

Whatever the heroic missionary efforts of Kumler and Terrell might have been, no lasting success was bestowed upon them. The United Brethren missions were located in the famous 'Border' and so in the midst of the heavy struggle about slavery. ". . . during the years of intense excitement . . . , our infant societies made little or no progress," Lawrence stated in 1861.(10) During the war, the situation worsened. "The county was raided by Quantrell, Anderson, Richie, and unidentified bands, who burned many of the homes and took everything of value from the few remaining residents".(11) In the midst of this destruction the United Brethren Mission ended. Details seem not to be recorded. The silence of the Inventory of the Jasper County Archives about the beginnings of the United Brethren suggest that the Brethren had no lasting influence in Jasper County.

In Northern Missouri

In 1858 Daniel Shuck was sent to central Missouri to establish the St. Aubert Mission. The Des Moines Conference started missions in the northern .part of Missouri as well. On October 18, 1859 (12) the ministers who worked in the northern area met in Atlanta, Macon County, Missouri. Presiding Bishop D. Edwards organized the conference, which was regarded as a re-organization of the Mission in Missouri, now moved to this point farther north and called the Missouri Conference.' At the time of its organization, the churches had 348 members. The following appointments were made: Eagleville--P. Shanklin; Putnam--J. Osborn and J. Mayfield; Chariton--G.H. Busby; St. Francisville--J.H. McVay; Newport--T. Perkins; Atlanta--W.R. Burns; Bible Grove--J.T. Timmons; St. Aubert Mission--S. Coblentz; Nodaway and Marrowbone Missions--M. Michael, who was also elected Presiding Elder.

Without the conflict over slavery experienced farther south, the missions here experienced healthy growth. The Minutes of 1860 report a membership of 688 and the existence of 46 classes. In 1861, the number of classes was 58, 1001 members were reported, and 80 preaching places were established. The numbers reflect an encouraging development. The growth of the United Brethren Church in northern Missouri kept up during the following decade: 1866 - ~,936 members; 1867 - 2,382 members; 1868 - 2,625 members. In 1870, the United Brethren had reached 3,063 members, 193 preaching places, and 145 classes. With this accomplishment the church reached the plateau on which it would march into the next century,

SLAVERY

The United Brethren existed, for the most part, in the northern states and therefore did not find themselves torn apart in the struggle over slavery as much as did other denominations. The Church had repudiated slavery early in the General Conference of 1821: "Resolved, that in no sense of the word shall slavery in whatsoever form it may exist, be tolerated in our church ••• "(1)

Since we have no records of the Annual Conferences in southern Missouri, our knowledge about their attitude toward slavery is very limited. However, the stance of the United Brethren in southern Missouri is clearly witnessed in H. Kumler, Jr.'s conversation with the slave-owner Mr. T., as recorded by Thompson. " ••• Mr. T. abruptly asked, 'are you an abolitionist?' Mr. Kumler, 'That depends upon the meaning you attach to the word. In the North in many places I would not be considered an abolitionist. But I am an anti-slavery man to the core'. The last remark stirred Mr. T.'s warm blood, and he quickly responded, 'Damn you! What business, then, have you here?!!! (2) As already mentioned, the Civil War had a devastating effect on the United Brethren mission in southern Missouri.

On March 4, 1865, near the end of the Civil War, the 7th Missouri Annual Conference (representing northern Missouri) adopted "Conference Resolutions on the State of the Country": " ••• While we deplore the ignorance and wickedness of the so-called Southern Confederacy, we feel it our duty to pray that the Lord would bless the Confederacy with a speedy downfall •••• we will sustain the President and his efforts to crush the rebellion ••• " (3) These resolutions show that the

Missouri United Brethren, in accordance with the General Conference, were firmly on the side of the Union in their anti-slavery and anti-Confederacy attitude and also in their strong support of the President.

AVALON COLLEGE

The United Brethren in Missouri furthered higher education. In 1869 the time had come to found an institution of higher learning in Missouri. "Since our efforts at cooperation with 'Lane University' have proven a failure, and our necessities begin to call loudly for some facilities for the education of our youth, it is recommended that we take immediate action preliminary to the establishment of an academy within the bounds of the conference". (1) It would be the only college to be founded by the United Brethren in Missouri.

Avalon College was intended to be an institution in which higher education could be attained under Christian influence by men as well as by women. The college was controlled by a board of trustees elected by the Missouri Annual Conference. In 1890 the college moved to Trenton, Missouri.

In the last years of the 19th century, the institution must have had rather nice and progressive facilities, especially in consideration of its rural location. The college catalogues of those years continually praise the sturdy brick building which was lighted with electricity and heated by steam. Degrees in Art, Philosophy, Literature, Science, and Paedagogy were offered at Avalon College. In 1898/99 the Trenton Conservatory of Music was united with the college. This union broadened the possibilities of education at Avalon.

The Brethren in Missouri were aware of the importance of the college and continually called for wholehearted support of the institution at the Annual Conferences. The Annual Conference of 1886 even went so far as to make the lasting success of the United Brethren dependent upon the success of Avalon: "Avalon College is necessary to the success of our work in Missouri". (2)

Nevertheless, with the change of the century, Avalon College ended its existence as an institution of the United Brethren. It became an institution of the American Oxford Movement and changed its name to Ruskin College. Avalon College in Missouri shared the destiny of most United Brethren institutions of higher education in America. "Between the years 1850 and 1890 a

total of twenty-six colleges and academies or 'seminaries' were founded, but all in due time were discontinued or were united with other institutions." (3) The financial burden of supporting the college. coupled with competition from other colleges in the area of academic attractiveness, was evidently too heavy for the few thousand members of the United Brethren Church in Missouri.

CHRISTIAN LIFE

The early years of the United Brethren were characterized by acceptance of the use of alcohol due to the denomination's German heritage. But the Brethren soon changed and first spoke against the production and sale, and later against the drinking of liquor. The United Brethren in Missouri were no exception. The Minutes of the Annual Conference of 1870 mention alcohol for the first time under the heading of 'Moral Reform': "The report pledges the influence of our ministry to retard, prevent, and, if possible, to suppress entirely the sale of ardent spirits as a beverage, and to this end denies patronage in the purchase of goods, drugs, or medicines, to any who sell or give away intoxicating liquors as a beverage ". (1)

During the following years the minutes contain similar statements, all aiming at the development of a social conscience on alcohol and the decision for temperance by individuals. Intemperance was regarded as harmful to the achievement of success in the world and to the spreading of Christianity. Preaching sermons about temperance at each charge was strongly recommended to each pastor. (2)

In 1879 the United Brethren in Missouri went a step further by pledging their support .to every "proper movement" (3) with the goal of prohibition of the production and sale of liquor. The United Brethren in Missouri subsequently supported wholeheartedly the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, regarding it "as a great power in the hands of God". (4)

Finally, in 1892 the United Brethren in Missouri worked for "national constitutional prohibition." (5) With its objective so clearly defined, the Missouri Brethren were a loud voice in the choir of Protestant Americans who united in the fight against intemperance as the major social problem. The Minutes of the last three decades of the nineteenth century (6) show clearly that temperance, followed by tobacco and Sunday observance, took the first and major place among the moral concerns of the United Brethren in Missouri, and that little energy and space was left for dealing with other emerging social problems.

The proper observance of the Sabbath was another major moral concern of the United Brethren in Missouri. Almost every year, the Annual Conference Minutes contain a paragraph concerning the increase of Sabbath desecration. The following statement serves as a good example: "We regard the observance of the Sabbath essential to the welfare of human society, and therefore protest against railroad companies, corporations, or individuals habitually transacting business upon this day, and we believe it sinful to make it a day of visiting and loitering". (7)

The United Brethren Church struggled for a long time with the question of simultaneous membership in both church and secret society. The General Conference of 1825 decided: "Resolved that in no way or manner nor in any sense of the word, shall Freemasonry be approved or tolerated in our church; and that should any members of our church ... continue to attend their lodges ... or if any member join the Freemasons, such member ... excludes himself from membership in our church".(8) A corresponding rule was added to the Constitution in 1841. At the General Conference of 1861, it was already obvious that the rule was softened and needed enforcement. It was decided that violators should "be dealt with as in other cases of immorality".(9) Only three persons voted against this decision, one of whom was M. Michael from the Missouri Conference.(10)

Beginning with 1869, petitions were brought to the General Conferences requesting modification of the anti-secrecy rule. In the Minutes of the Annual Conference of 1872, the United Brethren of Missouri opposed this tendency and instructed their delegates to the General Conference to fight against a change to a more liberal rule on membership in secret societies. Three years later, the Missouri United Brethren marked secretism with one of the strongest words Christian people can use to describe an evil: "we believe secretism to be one form of antichrist".(11) The opposition to secret societies was founded upon the societies' pretense of a theological and ethical base, whereas in reality the societies did not only exclude "Christ and the Spirit", (12) but also rejected all of those "without visible means of support". (13) The concealment of the societies' pretended goals were particularly unacceptable to the United Brethren.

The General Conference of 1877 represented the climax in the success of the 'radicals' who supported strict enforcement of the antisecrecy rule. The arguments of the following years show a slow swing of the pendulum to the side of the 'liberals' or so-called 'modificationists' who looked for an alteration of the rules. The United Brethren in Missouri continued with a strict

anti-secrecy attitude. In 1880, they sent a request to the General Conference "to make inquiry at an early day of t(he) session, as to whether any of its memb(ers) belong to secret societies ...."(14) The General Conference, which convened in 1881, seemingly did take no action or not sufficient action in the opinion of the Missourians. The Missouri Annual Conference regarded this "as an intend(ed) insult...." (15)

In 1885, the General Conference appointed a church commission on the Confession of Faith and Constitution. Among other tasks, the commission was called to formulate a new rule on secret societies. Article III, Section 1, of the new constitution said: "We declare that all secret combinations which infringe upon the right of those outside their organization, and whose principles and practices are injurious to the Christian character of their members, are contrary to the Word of God, and that Christians ought to have no connection with them".(16) With this statement, the absolute stance of the former anti-secrecy rule was relinquished. Membership in a secret society was no longer automatically followed by exclusion from the church. The statement maintained a warning against membership in secret societies. Finally, the United Brethren in Missouri followed the path of the liberals. In 1888, when all church members were required to vote on the issue, the Missouri Annual Conference counted 595 votes in favor and 83 votes against the newly formulated secrecy clause.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

At the beginning of the United Brethren Church, membership in the Annual and General Conferences was restricted to ministers. In 1877, the General Conference opened up the possibility of lay delegates to the Annual Conferences. Each Annual Conference was allowed to recceive lay representatives if two-thirds of the Annual Conference would vote in favor of it. The Missouri Annual Conference took immediate action and provided for lay delegates: "In pursuance of the provision in Discipline, pages 37 and 38, we, the members of the Missouri Annual Conference in regular session assembled, do adopt lay representation in this body..." (1) Only men were accepted as lay delegates at that time.

The constitution forbade lay membership in the General Conference. After the adoption of the new constitution in 1889, the General Conference seated laymen as well as clergy.

As already mentioned, the Gnera1 Conference of 1885 appointed a Church Commission with the task of improving the formulation of the Confession of Faith and the Constitution. In

1888 the church members were voting for the improved Confession of Faith, the new Constitution, and separately on two parts of the constitution; one concerning lay delegates for General Conference, the other relating to secret societies. The Missouri Conference counted 600 votes for the amended Confession of faith and Constitution. The same year, delegates for the General Conference were elected, among them A.W. Geeslin, regarded as 'radical' because he spoke against the suggested changes.

The General Conference of 1889 adopted the formulations of the Church Commission by a vote of 110 to 20 (2). After the adoption, Bishop M. Wright, together with several other delegates, including A. W. Geeslin' from the Missouri Conference, left the General Conference. (3) This group convened, claiming to be the General Conference of the true Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Later, they were. legally forbidden to call themselves by that name, whereupon they referred to themselves as The United Brethren Church (Old Constitution). This was the first division experienced in the United Brethren in Christ.

The Minutes of the Annual Conference dealt rather nonchalantly with the fact of division: "A.W. Geeslin, D.A. Beauchamp, A.D. Thomas, and J. Wagoner having irregularly withdrawn from the Church, their names were struck from the roll". (4) A few years later the Annual Conference estimated the effect of the division as minimal, since at the same time good growth had taken place. (5)

Church Growth and Stagnation

From the very beginning the United Brethren in Missouri were zealous for mission and evangelism. Each year the minutes contain statements at some length concerning the enormous need for mission. The following sentence presents a short example: "Resolved that each preacher in charge be required to preach a missionary sermon at a suitable time at each appointment and take up a collection for missionary purposes". (1)

The United Brethren in Missouri engaged in active evangelism and thus were able to grow remarkably during the 1860s. Church growth was encouraged by the enormous increase of population in Missouri during that time. Between 1850 and 1870 the population of the state almost tripled.

The membership statistics of the following decade show stagnation. The Missouri Brethren stay between 2000 and 4000, even though another million people were added to the population of Missouri between 1870 and 1890.

The lists of appointments of the United Brethren in Missouri show clearly that the Brethren stayed, seemingly rather contentedly and stubbornly, a denomination based on the small communities of rural Missouri. It appears that the implications of the population shift to the bigger towns and cities were not sufficiently recognized. The presiding elder, S.T. Wallace, had somewhat the character of a lonely voice crying in the wilderness when he urged the United Brethren to extend their mission to larger towns and cities: "Quite a number of larger towns are asking: 'Why don't you as a church come among us?' Dear brethren, the doors are open. Will we enter, or will we withhold our means from that God who has given salvation and all earthly goods that we possess?" (2) The United Brethren of Missouri are an example of a rural-bound small church that did not move with the people from the country to the city and thus limited its growth and experienced difficulties in keeping up church institutions and in facing the new social problems emerging at the end of the 19th century. An analysis of the United Brethren in Missouri in the 20th century could discover if the denomination ever was able to make up for this loss.

NOTES

1. W.N. Weekley and H.H. Fout, Our Heroes or United Brethren Home Missionaries. Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Home Missionary Society, 1908. p. 213
2. A.W. Drury, History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Dayton. Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1924, p. 755
3. Ibid, p. 755
4. Ibid, p. 755 and R.A. Thompson, Our Bishops. Dayton, Ohio: U.B. Publishing House, 1904, p. 253
5. J. Lawrence, The History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Vol. II. Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Printing Establishment, 1861, pp. 404-405
6. Drury, p. 755
7. Ibid., p. 440
8. Ibid., p. 756
9. Lawrence, p. 405
10. Ibid.
11. Inventory of the County Archives, Jasper County, Mo. No. 73, St. Louis, Ho., 1940, p. 19
12. Based on the Minutes of the Annual Conference, contrary to Lawrence, p. 405: " .. and in 1858 the ministry of that conference, who had been laboring in Missouri, assembled in Annual Conference at Atlanta, in Macon Co.".

Slavery

1. J.B. Behney and P.H. Eller, The History of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Nashville: Abingdon,1979, p. 124
2. Thompson, p. 254
3. Missouri Annual Conference Minutes, 1865, microfilm in Missouri Methodistica, Fayette, Mo. pp. 27-28

Avalon College

1. Mo. Annual Conference Minutes, 1869, p. 61
2. Ibid., 1866
3. Behney, p. 177

Christian Life

1. Mo. Annual Conference Minutes, 1870, p. 67
2. Minutes, 1872, p. 82
3. Minutes, 1879
4. Minutes, 1886
5. Minutes, 1892
6. The fight against intemperance is continued in the 20th century by the United Brethren of Missouri.
7. Minutes, 1879
8. Lawrence, p. 191
9. Ibid., p. 147
10. Drury, p. 450
11. Minutes, 1874
12. Minutes, 1871, p. 77
13. Minutes, 1871, p. 77
14. Minutes, 1881
15. Minutes, 1881
16. Drury, p. 501

Structural Changes

1. Minutes, 1877
2. Drury, p. 497
3. Drury, p. 503
4. Minutes, 1889
5. Minutes, 1895

Church Growth and Stagnation

1. Minutes, 1863, p. 17
2. Minutes, 1891

OUR COMMON HERITAGE

THE REV. DORSEY LEVELL[3]

It is a privilege for me to share in this small way in your annual conference. I am here, not as a historian, but as a fellow Christian and Pastor. Thus, this paper is not a historical document but an attempt to share in your life our common heritage.

When we speak of "Our Common Heritage" we do not mean ecclesiastical organization or statistical data but our common heritage centers in the lives of great men dedicated to the service of Christ and His Church. When we speak of great men of our heritage we remember John Wesley, Phillip William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, Francis Asbury, Jacob Albright, Bishop Frank, Bishop Milhouse, and the many, many who gave sacrificially of their lives during those intervening years.

The early founders of our churches were not only contemporaries but each was a pietist, a man of deep personal experience of faith, each rebelled against the established church of the time and foremost each was sensitive to the spiritual destitution of the 18th century.

Look with me briefly at the roots of our common heritage in the great founding fathers. The first of these was John Wesley. He was a man of methods. He got up at 4 :00 A.M. to allow himself time for Bible reading, meditation and prayer. He bound himself with other young men who were called "Methodist" because they had a method.

Volumes have been written concerning John Wesley. Here we would like to show how he was influenced by the German Pietistic movement. The "heart

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[3] Of the Brentwood EUB Church, Springfield, MO. Historical address delivered before the Missouri East Annual Conference, June 15, 1965 in Fayette, MO.

warming" experience at Aldersgate came while he listened to the reading of Martin Luther's "Preface to the Epistle to the Romans." When Wesley was crossing the Atlantic for the first time he was amazed to observe a group of German Moravians worship with complete serenity during a storm that brought panic to himself and the other passengers.

Later Wesley took up the study of German and became sufficiently proficient to translate some ten German hymns into English. He spent the summer of 1738 at a Moravian settlement at Herrnhut, Germany and recorded that his faith had been greatly strengthened.

Phillip William Otterbein was born in 1726 of a family of German Reformed Clergy. He was raised in a pious home and schooled in the atmosphere of the Heidelberg catechism. He was educated in the Calvinistic University at Herborn, Germany. Otterbeing was ordained on June 13, 1749, and served Reformed Churches in Germany until he responded to the call of Michael Schlatter in 1751 to come to the new world. He came to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1752. His ministry and preaching was characterized by earnestness and frankness. The years between 1752 and 1774 were busy years. The German Reformed Coetus in 1764 states, "Otterbein, in the last three years has almost worked himself to death." In 1774 he accepted the call to the German Evangelical Reformed Church of Baltimore after receiving a personal letter from Francis Asbury asking him to come.

A fellow workman with Otterbein was Martin Boehm who was born in Switzerland of Mennonite parents. He migrated with his parents to America but was dismissed from the Mennonite Church because he spoke English on occasion from the pulpit. At Pentecost, 1766 he was preaching in Isaac Long's barn outside Lancaster, Pennsylvania, when after the sermon Phillip William Otterbein came out of the crowd and embraced Boehm with the historic words, "We are brothers." Thus came the name "United Brethren."

Francis Asbury responded to the challenge of Wesley, "Our brethren in America call aloud for help. Who are willing to go over and help them?"

Five men responded but only Asbury stayed in America during the Revolutionary War. Asbury arrived in America in 1771. The Revolutionary War brought great strain between the Methodist societies and the Church of England. During the war the priests either returned to England or renounced their oath of allegiance to the King and Clergy Order and bore arms in the war. After the war Wesley pleaded for the Anglican Bishops to send ordained men but they replied that the rebels were not worth saving.

Wesley, convinced that something must be done assumed the power of ordination and commissioned Dr. Coke of Oxford, to come to America and ordain Francis Asbury, a lay preacher. At a conference in Baltimore at Christmas time 1784, Asbury, a layman, was ordained a bishop. When he was ordained he asked that his good friend Otterbein participate in the ordination. Thus the person, in the historic picture of this event in the white robe, is Otterbein. Another reason for his choice of Otterbein was that he was an officially educated and ordained clergyman.

Another great name in our common heritage is Jacob Albright. He was born in Pennsylvania of German Lutheran parents in 1759. He served in the Revolutionary War and soon after the war settled on a farm in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Later he opened a very prosperous tile factory. This factory provided funds for his family and his traveling as a lay exhorter. Albright was converted in a Methodist Class Meeting and granted an Exhorter's License. Between 1791 and 1807 he organized many classes among the German speaking people. In 1807 he organized "The Newly-Formed German Methodist Conference." They were rejected because of the use of German in the pulpit. In 1808 he translated the Methodist Discipline into German. For a period they were called "The So-Called Albright's People." In 1816 they officially took the name of Evangelical Association.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was born when the Church of England repudiated the ordination of Asbury by Coke through John Wesley. The roots of American Methodism go back to the Christmas Conference of 1784 when Asbury became the first American Bishop. The American

Methodist Episcopal Church was the first American body to work out an independent and national organization.

The followers of Otterbein and Martin Boehm were first officially organized in 1800 when the episcopal form of government was adopted and Otterbein and Boehm were elected bishops. In 1814 the first Book of Discipline was officially approved. The United Brethren Church was the first American born denomination. The followers of Albright continued longest as a movement before it became an organized church in 1816.

The unity of our churches only began with the friendship of Otterbein and Asbury. The records show how Evangelical, United Brethren and Methodist ministers shared in ordination services across boundaries. Many funeral services of our early clergy were officiated by men from the other church. The common name for the Evangelicals and United Brethren was "The German Methodists."

As early as 1809 proposals for union were made between the United Brethren and the Methodists. In 1814 Newcomer was prevented, by the flu, from attending the Methodist Conference for the purpose of a definite union. Some thought the flu was an omen so the union was discontinued. The United Brethren Journal of 1825 has a statement of lament because the merger was dropped in 1814. As early as 1813 Evangelical and United Brethren Churches were talking union and it became a reality in 1946. It is hoped that the union that began in 1809 between the United Brethren and the Methodists will be consummated in 1966.

The question might be asked, "Why is the Evangelical United Brethren Church so small today as related to the Methodist Church?" The Civil War which split the Methodist Church virtually killed the Evangelical United Brethren Church south of the Mason-Dixon line. The old German pastors had two points to every sermon during this period, slavery and secret societies. Thus, the church was seriously hurt by the Civil War. In fact in Kansas and Missouri many of the churches were burned and the preachers

shot. Another reason is the Evangelical United Brethren people were unwilling to give up the German language and lost many of their younger, more progressive people to the Methodist Church.

Another blow to the Evangelical United Brethren Church was World War I when our German friends became enemies. Bishop Epp tells of one Pastor who was hoisted to the hood of an autombile and ridden in derision through the streets to be dumped five miles outside the city. Bishop Mueller's father, a pastor of a German speaking congregation in Minnesota, had his church daubled with yellow paint, while his son was at the very time a Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Army. Many of our pastors had eggs thrown at them while calling and their automobiles stripped with yellow. The German language had lost its glamour.

Why are we uniting now? It is evident that we share a common heritage. Our years of growth and development follow almost identical lines. The mission to the German speaking people is now gone. This writer would ask, "Why should we be separate?"

We have a common set of problems. One of the most urgent problems here in the midwest is the many rural churches in declining communities; and then add to this the lack of clergy. We have in our churches a sinful waste of ministry when Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist Pastors travel the same roads only in opposite directions. Within Christendom is the urgent need to make a greater impact both locally and on the mission field. Union will officially unite our efforts and strengthen our witness. The most urgent call for union comes from the emphasis found in the ecumenical movement and the churches' serious consideration of Our Lord's Prayer, "That they might be one."

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